

Each year, 24 billion gallons of sewage are dumped into the Great Lakes from shoreline cities. To put it in perspective, that is the equivalent of more than 94,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools filled with sewage.

Besides from being disgusting, sewage dumping is a leading cause of the harmful bacteria E. coli. Unsafe levels of E. coli in Lake Michigan closed many beaches this weekend according to the Chicago Tribune. This year, we've already seen a fourfold increase in the number of Lake Michigan beach closures.

Last Thursday, Congressman Dan Lipinski and I announced legislation that would quadruple fines for communities that dump sewage into the Great Lakes. We need to stop poisoning our water supply. This legislation will help force coastal cities to update their sewage treatment systems to protect the water supply for more than 40 million people.

Chicago has made great strides in terms of treatment options, including projects like the "Deep Tunnel" that prevent storm system overflows. It's time for other communities to take responsibility for their environmental records.

Below is a picture from last Thursday's event, as well as links to a few news reports. I've also included a graph that details the top sewage dumpers across the Great Lakes. Detroit tops the list with more than 13 billion gallons.

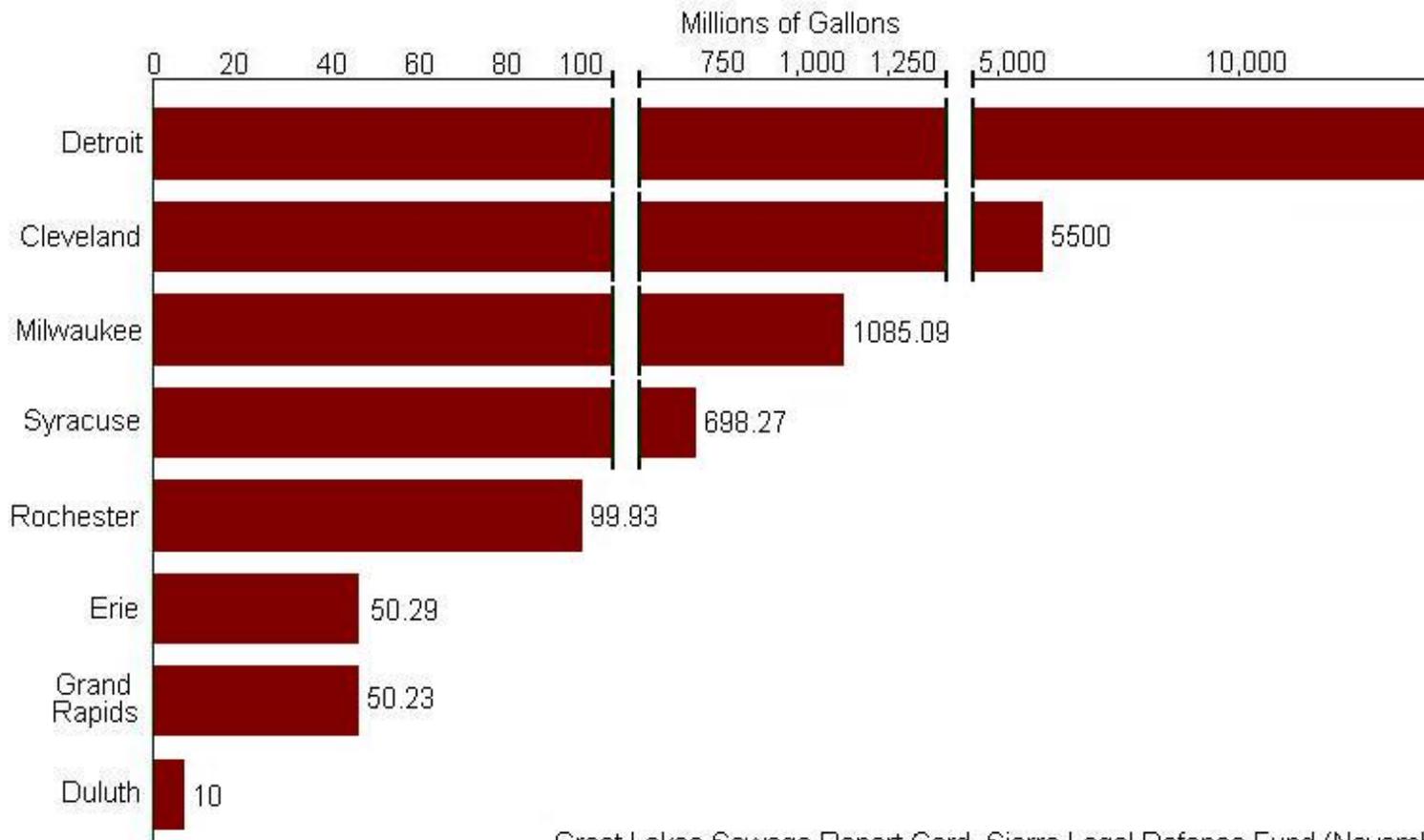
[Congressmen Kirk and Lipinski discuss their sewage dumping legislation on NBC 5 Chicago.](#)

[ABC 7 Chicago clip.](#)



Congressmen Kirk and Lipinski introduce legislation to stop dumping sewage in the Great Lakes

### Average Annual Combined Sewage Overflows into the Great Lakes (2005)



Great Lakes Sewage Report Card, Sierra Legal Defence Fund (November 2006)